

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF MINNESOTA
Criminal No. 23-160 (NEB/JFD)

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,)
)
 Plaintiff,)
)
 v.)
)
 TYREESE GILES (6),)
)
 JOSIAH TAYLOR (7),)
)
 TREVAUN ROBINSON (10),)
)
 WILLIAM BANKS (19),)
)
 GREGORY BROWN (26),)
)
 MARQUES WALKER (27),)
)
 Defendants.

**GOVERNMENT'S TRIAL
BRIEF**

The United States of America by and through its attorneys, Lisa D. Kirkpatrick, Acting United States Attorney for the District of Minnesota, and Assistant United States Attorneys Thomas Calhoun-Lopez and Carla J. Baumel, and David L. Jaffe, Chief of the Violent Crime and Racketeering Section of the Department of Justice, and Trial Attorneys Brian W. Lynch and Alyssa Levey-Weinstein, respectfully submits its trial brief in the above-captioned case.

I. TRIAL COUNSEL

The United States will be represented by the following counsel:

Assistant U.S. Attorney Thomas Calhoun-Lopez
300 South Fourth Street, Suite 600
Minneapolis, MN 55415
Desk: 612-664-5659
Cell: 612-388-2181
Thomas.Calhoun-Lopez@usdoj.gov

Assistant U.S. Attorney Carla J. Baumel
300 South Fourth Street, Suite 600
Minneapolis, MN 55415
Desk: 612-664-5652
Cell: 612-432-6360
Carla.Baumel@usdoj.gov

Trial Attorney Brian W. Lynch
1301 New York Avenue NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20005
Desk: 202-514-3594
Cell: 202-549-3843
Brian.W.Lynch@usdoj.gov

Trial Attorney Alyssa Levey-Weinstein
1301 New York Avenue NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20005
Desk: 202-616-4435
Cell: 202-355-5737
Alyssa.Levey-Weinstein@usdoj.gov

II. INDICTMENT

The trial indictment (ECF No. 1708, Third Superceding Indictment) charges the defendants as follows:

Defendant Tyreese Giles is charged with one count:

- RICO Conspiracy (Count 1).

Defendant Josiah Taylor is charged with four counts:

- RICO Conspiracy (Count 1);
- Conspiracy to Distribute Controlled Substances (Count 3);
- Possessing a Firearm in Furtherance of Drug Trafficking (Count 7); and
- Distributing a Controlled Substance (Count 9).

Defendant Trevaun Robinson is charged with three counts:

- RICO Conspiracy (Count 1);
- Conspiracy to Distribute Controlled Substances (Count 3); and
- Possessing a Firearm in Furtherance of Drug Trafficking (Count 6).

Defendant William Banks is charged with two counts:

- RICO Conspiracy (Count 1); and
- Conspiracy to Distribute Controlled Substances (Count 3).

Defendant Gregory Brown is charged with two counts:

- RICO Conspiracy (Count 1); and
- Conspiracy to Distribute Controlled Substances (Count 3).

Defendant Marques Walker is charged with four counts:

- RICO Conspiracy (Count 1);
- Conspiracy to Distribute Controlled Substances (Count 3);

- Distributing a Controlled Substance (Count 9); and
- Possessing with Intent to Distribute a Controlled Substance (Count 10).

III. SUMMARY OF THE EVIDENCE AT TRIAL

The United States anticipates the evidence at trial will prove the following facts:

a. The Enterprise: The Highs Gang

The Highs Gang is a street gang that has existed in Minneapolis since the early 2000s. The Highs are primarily active in the area north of West Broadway Avenue in Minneapolis. By contrast, the High's main rival—the Lows—are active in and control territory south of West Broadway Avenue. Members of the Highs have committed crimes including murder, narcotics trafficking, weapons violations, burglaries, robberies, assault, and fraud.



The government anticipates one or more witnesses with prior or current affiliations/memberships within the Highs (referenced herein as “Cooperating Defendant”) will testify, in effect:

- Members of the Highs are loosely organized into a series of sub-units, or “cliques,” that operate somewhat independently of one another. The most prominent sects of the Highs are Young N’ Thuggin’ (“YNT”), Freeshots/Bodygang, SayLess, Taliban, Emerson Murder Boys (“EMB”), Black Mob, and others. Some High members belong to more than one clique, and members of different cliques are expected to come to the aid of one another. Furthermore, High members belonging to different cliques often commit crimes with each other.

- The Highs congregate at specific businesses within their territory, including Winner Gas Station, Merwin Liquors, Walgreens, AutoZone, and Boost Mobile.
- The Highs do not have a formal rank structure. The Highs have members who are more respected than others and are considered leaders. These members control the drug trade in Highs territory and often take the lead in obtaining and distributing firearms.
- There is no formal initiation process to join the Highs. Instead, prospective members prove their loyalty to the gang by committing acts of violence for the benefit of the gang or offering another benefit to the gang, such as introducing a source for firearms or narcotics. Highs members can be kicked out of the gang, or physically assaulted, or both, for failing to “put in the work.”

Members of the Highs demonstrate their affiliation with the gang in various ways, including, but not limited to: using common phrases or monikers on social media to publicly identify themselves with their gang, such as posting “Broadway”—a reference to the intersection at West Broadway Avenue and Lyndale Avenue North—on social media, paying tribute to deceased or incarcerated members publicly on social media, wearing clothing with gang-related phrases and tributes to deceased members, and utilizing common hand signs. They also post on social media to antagonize and disrespect the Lows, such as by making the Low’s L-shaped hand sign with their thumb and index finger and pointing their index finger towards the ground. This is referred to as “dropping the L.”

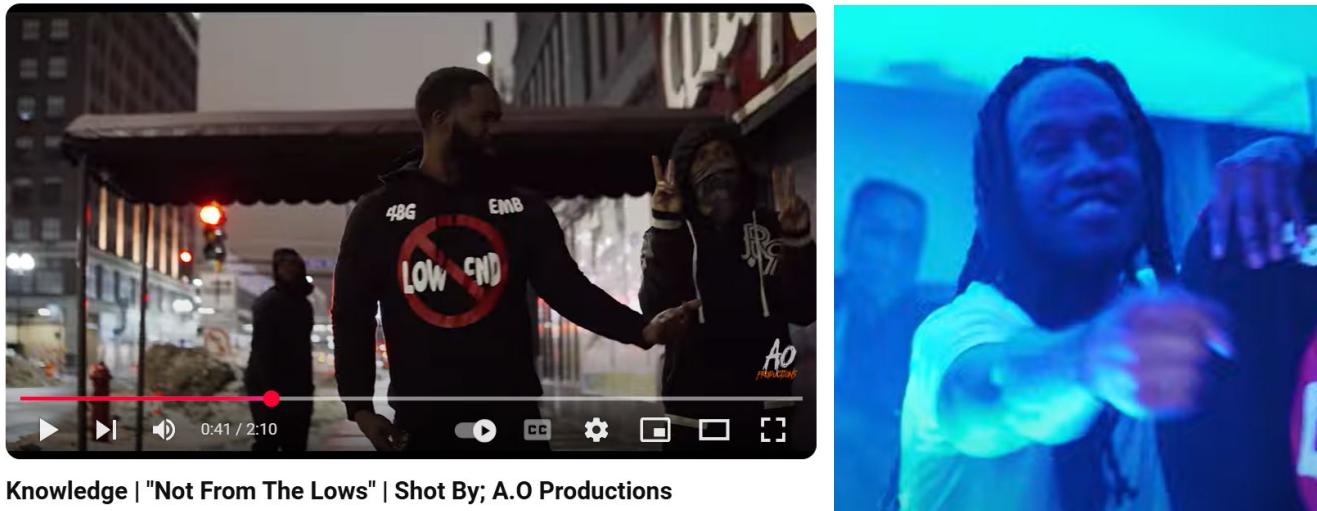


Defendant Taylor in a photograph posted on social media “dropping the L.”



Hights member Jovan Knight and defendant Giles making a gang sign that represents the “YNT” clique.

Members of the Highs also created rap videos to promote their gang and antagonize the Lows. Defendant Brown created a video on YouTube on January 17, 2021 called “Not from the Lows,” in which members of the Highs can be seen wearing gang clothing, making gang signs, rapping about different Highs cliques and territory, and disrespecting the Lows. In the video, the Highs members also show a location where Lows member Decari Starr was killed in 2010, as a sign of disrespect to the Lows.



Knowledge | "Not From The Lows" | Shot By; A.O Productions

Left: Defendant G. Brown wearing a hooded sweatshirt with "Low End" crossed out, which was meant to disrespect the Lows. Brown's sweatshirt also reads "EMB," which is a reference to the Highs Emerson Murder Boys clique.

Right: Defendant T. Robinson as seen in the rap video.

1. *Alleged Overt Acts: Murders and Attempted Murders*

The common purposes of the Highs include committing crimes of violence to promote and enhance the reputation of the enterprise and to keep rival gang members in fear; and to enrich gang leaders, members, and associates through fraud, narcotics trafficking, firearms, and the commission of robberies. Highs members gain status in the enterprise by committing criminal activities beneficial to the gang. For example, Highs members are expected to locate and kill rival gang members, particularly after an act of violence has occurred against a Highs member. By committing such violence, Highs members gain respect in the gang, which can include receiving protection, financial opportunities, and access to narcotics and firearms.

i. *Robinson and Another Highs Member Shoot into a Crowd on July 7, 2019*

On the evening of July 6, 2019, a large group of Highs members, including Defendant Robinson, Antwon Whitfield-Smart, and Christopher Finch gathered at a cemetery to celebrate the birthday of deceased Highs member Jamarius Shief, also known as “Boosie.”

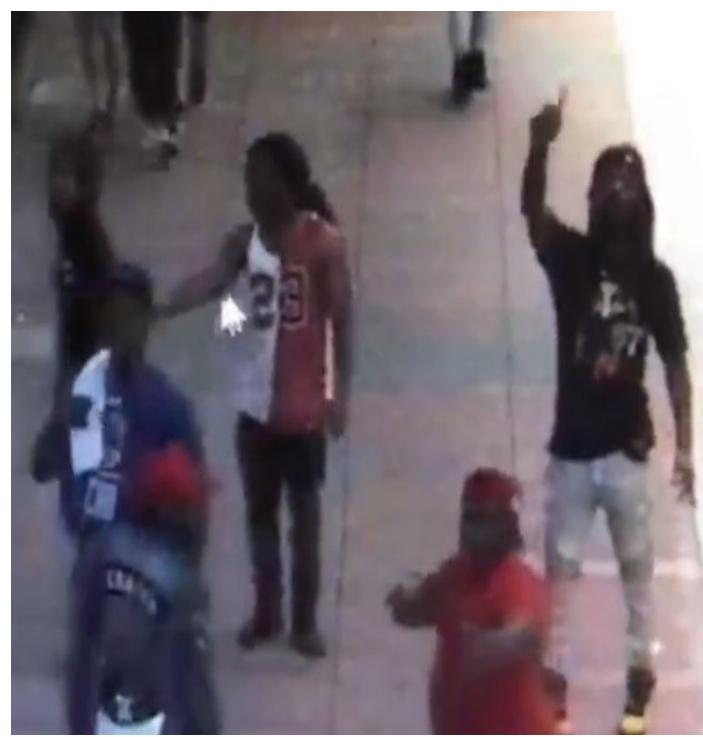


Left: Finch posted this photograph of the cemetery gathering on his Facebook account on July 7, 2025. Finch is wearing a bright orange vest over a black t-shirt on the left-hand side.

Right: Whitfield-Smart with a firearm in his waistband at the cemetery, wearing the same black and silver shoes as seen in the surveillance video below.

Several hours later, around 1:30 a.m. on July 7, 2019, Defendant Robinson, Whitfield-Smart, and twelve other Highs members and associates gathered in downtown Minneapolis on Hennepin Avenue South. As captured on surveillance footage from the Mayo Clinic and Minneapolis Milestone

cameras, Defendant Robinson reached out and touched Whitfield-Smart's lower back as they both started moving northbound. Defendant Robinson appeared to be guiding and nudging Whitfield-Smart forward and encouraging him, while saying to someone from the north "come on" and "come here."



Defendant Robinson (on the right in the red and white jersey) pushing Whitfield-Smart (on the left in all black) forward.

Two white men and a white woman weaved through the group. As the group approached Robinson and Whitfield-Smart, Whitfield-Smart raised the gun, pointed it north, and fired twice, causing people walking in the area to flee in different directions.

One of the rounds fired by Whitfield-Smart struck a vehicle stopped at a red light on 6th Street and Hennepin Avenue South, causing glass to fly into

the eye of one of the occupants of the vehicle. The occupant was taken to the hospital, where she received stitches to her eye.

On July 31, 2019, officers of the Minneapolis Police Department arrested Defendant Robinson at the Winner Gas Station. At the time of his arrest, Defendant Robinson was carrying 3.4 grams of marijuana.

ii. *April 12, 2021 Robbery and Murder of Ahmed Badal*

From the evening of April 11, 2021, into the early morning hours of April 12, 2021, looting took place in the south side of Minneapolis following the shooting death of Duante Wright by Brooklyn Police Officer Kim Potter. Highs members Jovan Knight, Jaylen Salter, Jarrett Robinson, and two juveniles with the initials J.B. and M.W. met up that evening to participate in the looting. M.W. was driving a Chrysler 200 with J.B. and Knight was in another vehicle with Salter and J. Robinson. They followed a group of Somali men and boxed them in with their vehicles, intending to rob them. Salter got out of his vehicle and walked up to one of the men, identified in the trial indictment as Victim F. Salter took Victim F's cell phone and went through his pockets before shooting Victim F in the leg.

During the chaos of the robbery and shooting, one of the Highs members accidentally shot J.B. Williams put J.B. in the Chrysler 200 to take him to the hospital but crashed into a Hyundai Sonata one block later. As captured on surveillance footage, the driver of the Sonata, later identified as Ahmed Badal,

got out of his vehicle and began moving towards the intersection where the crash occurred. As Badal leaves the camera view, Salter can be seen firing seven rounds towards Badal. J.B. and Badal both died as a result of their gunshot wounds.

iii. *August 8, 2021 Shooting of Arequise Morgan and Murder of Darryl Wells*

On August 7, 2021, Prince Martin, a prominent Highs member, was shot and killed at the Winner Gas Station. Martin was a well-respected member of the YNT clique and the Highs in general. On August 8, 2021, a memorial was held at Winner Gas that attracted large crowds of Highs members. Members of the Highs distributed firearms and encouraged each other to retaliate against Lows members for the murder. Surveillance footage from Winner Gas captured Highs members in attendance at the memorial, including Defendant Taylor, Defendant Robinson, Damone Rhodes, Deandre Barnes, and Deandre Poe.

At around 5:42 p.m. that same day, Dantrell Johnson and Gregory Hamilton drove to Wally's Foods and shot Arequise Morgan, a Lows associate. The shooting was captured on surveillance video and showed Hamilton, a passenger in a van driven by Dantrell Johnson, pointing a firearm towards Morgan, who then reacted to the gunfire. The van then drove to a nearby Salvation Army parking lot, where Dantrell Johnson and Hamilton exited the

van. They met up with William Johnson, who was standing near the parking lot, and walked into Winner Gas. Morgan was shot in the back and survived his gunshot wound.

Approximately two hours after the shooting of Morgan, at around 7:53 p.m., Dantrell Johnson, Hamilton, Keon Pruitt, William Johnson, and two juveniles with the initials C.J. and E.W. travelled to the Skyline Market, a known Lows hangout, where they shot and killed Darryl Wells. Pruitt, C.J., and E.W. were in a white stolen Porsche Macan. Dantrell Johnson, Hamilton, and William Johnson were in William Johnson's gray Dodge Charger. This was another shooting intended to retaliate against the killing of Prince Martin; the defendants mistakenly assumed that Wells was a Lows member, when in fact he had no gang affiliations whatsoever.

Surveillance video from Skyline Market captured the shooting and showed Dantrell Johnson and Hamilton walking towards the back of the store down separate aisles. Dantrell Johnson approached Wells from the middle aisle of the store, holding two firearms. Wells turned to run, and Dantrell Johnson fired multiple times at him. Wells fell forward, and Dantrell Johnson ran towards him but fell. Hamilton stood near the front counter and pointed a handgun towards Wells.

Wells ran out the front door onto Glenwood Avenue North and towards the driver's side of a white Porsche Macan that was driving eastbound.

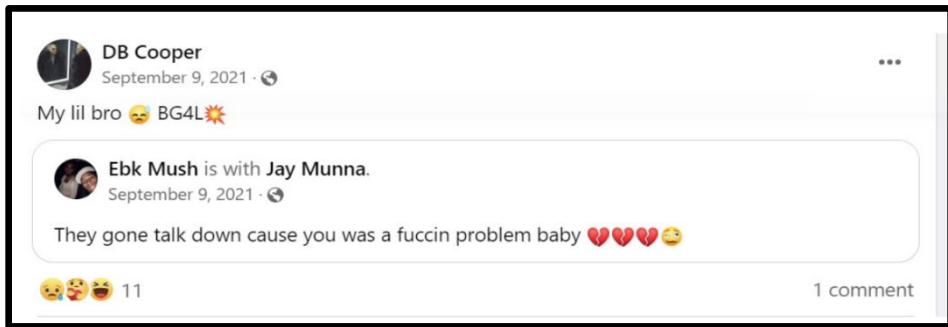
Unfortunately for Wells, this vehicle was driven by another Highs member—Pruitt. Wells made physical contact with the Porsche, before running northbound across Glenwood Avenue North, while the Porsche continued to drive westbound on Glenwood Avenue North.

Once outside the store, Dantrell Johnson and Hamilton pointed their firearms at Wells and fired as Wells fled for his life. Meanwhile the two juveniles in Pruitt's stolen Porsche got out of the vehicle and ran to the alley where Wells had collapsed. The juveniles fired bullets into Wells as he lay wounded on the ground. They then got back into the Porsche and drove away.

Law enforcement officers arrived at Glenwood Avenue North less than a minute after the shooting and attempted to render emergency aid. EMS transported Wells to the hospital, where he was later pronounced dead.

iv. *September 9, 2021 Murder of Darien Berry*

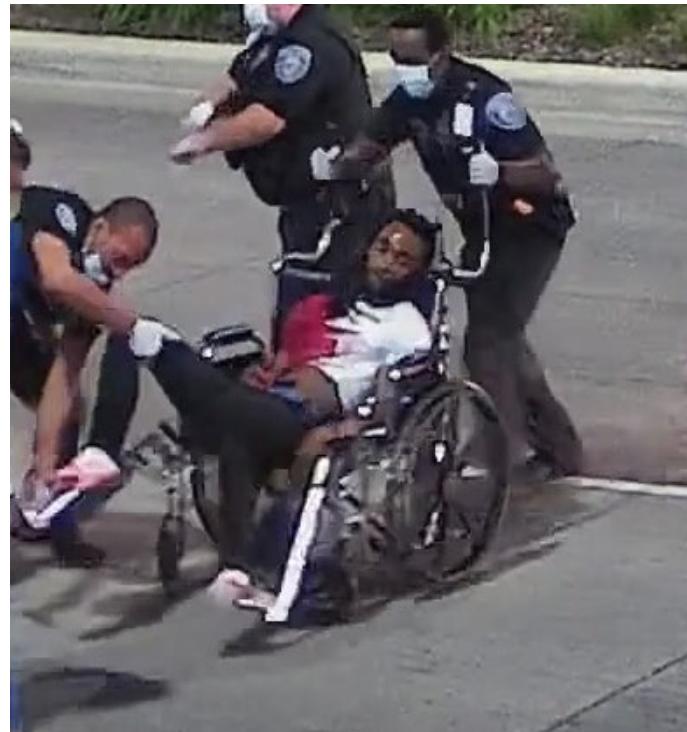
On September 9, 2021, Highs member Jaylen Salter was shot and killed at a barbershop in Minneapolis. Highs members suspected that Lows were responsible for the killing and were expected to retaliate against the Lows.



Giles ("DB Cooper") shared a Facebook post from Salter ("Jay Munna") approximately one hour after he was killed.

Approximately two hours after Salter's murder, Defendant Giles traveled to Pennwood Market, a known Low's hangout, where he shot and killed Lows member Darien Berry.

Surveillance footage from Pennwood Market captured Giles committing the murder. Specifically, the video showed Berry standing in front of the market and next to a white cargo van with two unknown males. The three were talking when they appeared to react to gunshots, and Berry began holding his chest. The two males ran inside of the market, while Berry ran



Left: Giles running after Berry at Pennwood Market
Right: Giles arriving at Hennepin County Medical Center with a gunshot wound

behind a light-colored SUV. Giles can be seen chasing after Berry, pointing a firearm towards the area where Berry was hiding, and firing his weapon.

Giles then started to run away from the market, traveling westbound. James Reliford came out from behind Pennwood Market and fired a weapon in Giles's direction. Giles can be seen abruptly falling to the ground afterwards, before going out of view of the surveillance camera. Reliford then drove Berry to the hospital, where Berry died from his gunshot wounds. Giles was also taken to the hospital and arrived a few minutes after Berry, but he recovered from his injuries.

v. September 14, 2021, Murder of Harvey Williams

On September 14, 2021, just before 8:00 p.m., Harvey Williams—a former Lows member—was driving on 49th Avenue North between 6th Street North and Lyndale Avenue North. He had just left Olson Elementary School, where he was watching his nephew play football, and was driving a 2006 red Chevrolet Monte Carlo.

Defendant Taylor followed Williams out of the parking lot of the elementary school in a Lincoln Navigator. Taylor drove eastbound on 49th Avenue North at a high rate of speed, pulling his vehicle in front of Williams' Monte Carlo. At that point, Taylor opened fire at Williams. He fired at least 30 rounds, striking Williams in the chest and the vehicle in the hood, front bumper, driver side windshield, driver door, and driver seat. Williams then

drove off an embankment along the road, and video shows the vehicle going airborne and clearing trees before landing on the freeway access ramp below. Williams was pronounced dead at the scene.



Officers examining Williams' vehicle, which was riddled with bullet holes

Officers located twenty-six .40 caliber cartridge casings on 49th Avenue North between Lyndale Avenue North and 6th Street North. Despite finding a .380 caliber firearm in Williams' vehicle, officers did not recover any .380 caliber cartridge casings. They also obtained paperwork from a dealership showing that Taylor had been in possession of the Lincoln Navigator as a loaner car at the time of the murder, and the day after the murder, he requested a different vehicle.

Historical cell-site records for Taylor also tie him to the murder. Specifically, Taylor's cell phone was in the area of Oldson Elementary School

at 7:21 p.m., and his phone was similarly not active again until 8:18 p.m., approximately twenty minutes after Williams's murder.

vi. *November 7, 2021 Shooting of Victims M, N, and O*

On November 7, 2021, Highs members Knight, Isaac Hodge, Douglas Mobley, a juvenile known by the initials M.W., Demonta Mathis, and Charles Evans attempted to shoot a Lows member identified in the trial indictment as Victim M outside of a Speedway gas station in Lows territory. They missed, and instead struck individuals identified in the trial indictment as Victims N and O.

Surveillance footage from the Speedway and adjacent businesses captured the shooting. The videos show a group of people arriving in three different vehicles and parking in the lot north of Minneapolis Tattoo around 2:00 a.m. Some of the group, consisting of Knight, Hodge, Mobley, M.W., and Mathis, crossed to the east side of Lyndale Avenue South and walked to the north side of West 22nd Street.

Victim M can be seen leaving a liquor store and standing in front of the northwest corner of the intersection of West 22nd Street and Lyndale Avenue South. He briefly walked out of view of surveillance cameras and returned shortly with two women. He appeared to see the group of Highs members approaching and retreated westbound on West 22nd Street between two vehicles. One of the vehicles was a Chevrolet Impala driven by Victim O.

Knight, Hodge, Mobley, M.W., and Mathis crossed Lyndale Avenue South, behind Hum's Liquor on the northwest side of the intersection. Some of the men, including M.W., appeared to be holding firearms in their right hands. At 2:14 a.m., Knight crossed the intersection and ran into the Speedway parking lot, shooting into the direction of the Impala where James was last seen standing. Knight and Mathis then ran across Lyndale Avenue to Knight's vehicle.

Hodge drew a firearm and ran behind a car parked on the northside of West 22nd Street. He walked up the side of the vehicle, kneeled, and fired in the direction of the Impala, before fleeing across Lyndale Avenue South to his vehicle. Evans, Mobley, and M.W. also appeared to fire in the direction of the Speedway. Surveillance video showed that Evans was the shooter who injured Victim N, while Victim N was walking past the Speedway on his way home. Hodge, Evans, Mobley, and Williams then fled in two separate vehicles.

Law enforcement officers found evidence that over fifty gunshots were fired that evening. Victim N was shot in his back and left leg and Victim O was shot in his upper back. Both Victim N and Victim O survived their gunshot wounds.

vii. *January 7, 2021 Desecration of Memorial for a Lows Member and Shooting at Lows Associates*

On January 7, 2022, Knight posted a video to Snapchat, showing himself possessing a firearm with a fifty-round drum. He stated, “When I seen an Opp I’m going to strike.” That same day, at approximately 5:07 p.m., Highs member Dashaun Morris was also captured in a cell phone video dancing and holding a firearm at 42nd Avenue North and Lyndale Avenue North, across from the barbershop where Salter was murdered.

Moments after that video was captured, Knight destroyed a memorial to Emanuel Jones, a known Lows member who was killed on October 31, 2021. The video was captured by another cell phone video. In a frame of the video, a Toyota Corolla can be seen driving into the area. Knight then ran back to the rear passenger side of his vehicle and stated, “Give me my 50.” A third party handed Knight a firearm with an attached machinegun conversion device (or “switch”). The video briefly goes dark, and three different bursts of automatic gunfire can be heard, before Morris is visible in the video. One minute later, Knight is seen walking with the firearm in his hand near Morris.

MPD officers responded to the scene for reports of shots fired within a minute. They located a Toyota Corolla with three occupants and found four bullet defects. None of the occupants were struck by gunfire.

2. Other Overt Acts: Possession and Sharing of Firearms

As demonstrated by the significant number of shootings and murders, Highs members frequently use and share firearms as part of their membership in the criminal enterprise. A cooperating defendant will testify about one of the benefits of membership in the Highs: access to and the trading and sharing of firearms. He will further testify that proceeds from narcotics transactions are used to purchase firearms and narcotics, which are distributed among Highs members or used for the further distribution of narcotics.

i. *Defendant Robinson's Possession of a Firearm on June 7, 2018*

On June 7, 2018, MPD officers became aware of a Snapchat video recently posted by Highs member Shanami General-Thomas. In the video, General-Thomas can be seen sitting in the front seat of a SUV driven by Defendant Robinson and possessing a black firearm with a silver magazine. In a second Snapchat video, General-Thomas displayed two firearms.

Later in the day, officers saw an SUV approach a stop sign and were able to see that General-Thomas was in the front passenger seat. They conducted a traffic stop on the vehicle, and identified Defendant Robinson as the driver, General-Thomas in the front passenger seat, and another individual in the rear passenger seat.

Officers called the three occupants out of the vehicle and immediately found two firearms under the front seat where General-Thomas was sitting,



including a black firearm with a silver magazine. Officers also located a bag of marijuana in the center console of the vehicle, which contained approximately 4.8 grams of marijuana.

ii. *Giles's Possession of a Firearm on April 15, 2019*

On April 15, 2019, at around 10:30 p.m., Robbinsdale Police Department officers observed a white SUV traveling at high speed and changing a lane without using a turn signal. Officers initiated a traffic stop, and after the vehicle accelerated through an intersection, it abruptly stopped. As officers approached the SUV, they saw a front seat passenger making furtive movements towards the rear floorboard behind the seat; officers were

concerned that the passenger was attempting to conceal a firearm or contraband.

Officers spoke with the driver, Defendant Giles. Giles avoided eye contact with officers and attempted to place a phone call, appearing to stall and ignore officers' questions. When officers asked the passenger, Highs member Malik Carr-Riggins, why he was making movements, he replied that he was "moving something."

Officers directed Giles out of the vehicle and noticed a sandwich bag in Giles's front sweatshirt pocket, which contained marijuana. On Carr-Riggins's person, officers further found another baggie of marijuana, as well as a clear plastic bag with seven rounds of .380 ammunition. Officers also searched the vehicle and recovered a firearm behind the front passenger seat along the floorboard.

iii. Giles's Possession of a Firearm on June 21, 2019

On June 21, 2019, MPD officers were conducting surveillance around 5th Street North and Broadway Avenue North, when they saw a gray Dodge Charger pull into the AutoZone parking lot and park next to a white Kia sedan. Three males Highs members—Defendant Giles, Calvin Wright, and Clarence Walker—and one woman, Ariana Powell, exited the Charger. Powell then removed a firearm from the Kia's trunk in a black case, which she then put into the trunk of the Charger. Giles, Wright, and Walker were standing near

the trunk with access to the firearm when they were stopped and placed under arrest.

iv. *Defendant Robinson's Possession of a Firearm and Fentanyl on August 10, 2021*

On August 10, 2021, at approximately 2:45 p.m., MPD officers conducting surveillance saw Defendant Robinson at Winner Gas, who they knew had a felony arrest warrant. Robinson got into a vehicle driven by a woman, who drove them into the nearby parking lot of the Fourth Street Saloon.

Once in the parking lot, MPD officers stopped the vehicle. Defendant Robinson exited the front passenger seat of the vehicle with his hands up and could be seen holding a small plastic baggie with 85 fentanyl pills. Officers searched the vehicle and found a firearm between the right side of the driver's seat and the center console. They further recovered a loose round of ammunition under the rear passenger seat.



Defendant Robinson holding a bag of fentanyl pills during his arrest

v. *Taylor's Possession of a Firearm and Oxycodone on June 10, 2022*

On June 10, 2022, at around 4:05 p.m., MPD officers attempted to stop and search Defendant Taylor's vehicle, a white Dodge Caravan, pursuant to a warrant. Officers located Taylor inside the parked Caravan with Highs member Matthew Robinson in the area of Washington Avenue North and 21st Avenue North. Officers attempted to stop the vehicle, approaching with several squad cars with emergency lights activated.

Taylor attempted to flee in the Caravan, accelerating his vehicle and driving onto the adjacent sidewalk. He struck a parked car before lodging his vehicle between a light pole and a building. Officers continued to order Defendant Taylor and Matthew Robinson to exit the vehicle, but for several

minutes, they refused to comply. It appeared that the occupants were moving inside the vehicle.

Officers eventually shot mace into the vehicle, causing Defendant Taylor and Matthew Robinson to roll down the windows and allow officers to take them into custody. While searching Taylor incident to arrest, they recovered approximately \$1,095 in U.S. currency from his person. Officers also searched the Caravan, finding a firearm with an extended magazine and 50 fentanyl pills in a plastic bag in a panel above the rear driver's side tire. They further recovered from the vehicle a total of \$2,623 in U.S. currency, a bag of marijuana from the door panel, and four cell phones. A small amount of marijuana was



Left: Taylor's vehicle lodged between a building and a light post
Right: The oxycodone pills found inside Taylor's vehicle

also located on the ground outside of the vehicle.

Taylor was booked and transported to Hennepin County Jail. While he was being processed, jail staff recovered at least 90 oxycodone pills from Taylor's rectum.

3. Other Overt Acts: Narcotics Trafficking

Another purpose of the Highs enterprise is to enrich the leaders, members, and associates through, among other things, illegal trafficking and distribution of controlled substances. A cooperating defendant will testify that Highs members often sold fentanyl pills and other narcotics outside of Merwin Liquors, Winner Gas station, Boost Mobile, and other high-traffic areas in Highs territory. Highs members gain respect and stature in the gang by making more money from narcotics sales.

A cooperating defendant will further testify about how Highs members had sources of fentanyl and other narcotics based in Arizona. In the course of their investigation, law enforcement officers found significant evidence in the form of flight records, digital communications, and intercepted drug parcels, showing the pattern of narcotics distribution from the Highs' sources in Arizona to Minneapolis.

i. Flight Records

Law enforcement officers obtained records of flights for multiple Highs members engaged in narcotics trafficking, including for Defendant Walker,

Defendant Gregory Brown, and co-Defendants Ronnell Lockhart, Montez Brown, Robert Lesure, Avante Nix, Deandre Poe, and Calvin Wright. As detailed below, flight records showed how these gang members would regularly travel to and from Minneapolis and Phoenix to purchase fentanyl pills and other narcotics, to bring back for sale on behalf of the enterprise in Minneapolis:

- From July 27, 2020 through June 11, 2023, Lockhart took at least seven round trip flights from Minneapolis to Phoenix.
- From August 15, 2020 through October 25, 2021, Defendant Walker took at least five round trip flights from Minneapolis to Phoenix.
- From May 16, 2021 through March 18, 2022, Montez Brown took at least ten round trip flights from Minneapolis to Phoenix.
- From July 1, 2021 through June 21, 2022, Defendant Gregory Brown took at least eleven round trip flights from Minneapolis to Phoenix.
- On November 28, 2021 to December 1, 2021, Defendant Gregory Brown, Lesure, Nix, and Wright flew round trip between Minneapolis and Phoenix.
- From November 28, 2021 to November 16, 2022, Nix took at least ten round trip flights from Minneapolis to Phoenix.
- From November 6, 2022 through May 24, 2023, Poe took at least seven round trip flights from Minneapolis to Phoenix.

ii. *Banks with Prince Martin with Marijuana and Oxycodone on March 4, 2019*

On March 4, 2019, MPD officers saw Defendant Banks in the driver's seat of a white Chevrolet parked at the Wendy's located at 421 West Broadway

Avenue in Minneapolis. Prominent Highs member Prince Martin (whose murder is discussed above) was seated in the passenger seat. Knowing that Banks had a revoked driver's license, officers approached the vehicle. While speaking to Banks, officers smelled marijuana and directed him and Martin out of the vehicle.

In the front cupholder of the vehicle, which had just been in arm's reach of Banks, officers could see a blue container that contained 27 oxycodone pills, and \$935 with a rubber binder. A further search of the vehicle yielded a plastic bag containing approximately 36 grams of marijuana, a digital scale, a small baggie with three oxycodone pills, a box of plastic baggies, and several cell phones.

In a post-*Miranda* statement, Banks explained that he was the owner and sole driver of the Chevrolet, and that no one other than he and his friend Martin had been in the vehicle that day. He admitted ownership of the marijuana found in the vehicle, as well as the bag of three pills. He stated that he planned to sell the marijuana that day and usually sells a "zip" or ounce of marijuana. He denied that the blue container of oxycodone pills was his but refused to say who it belonged to.



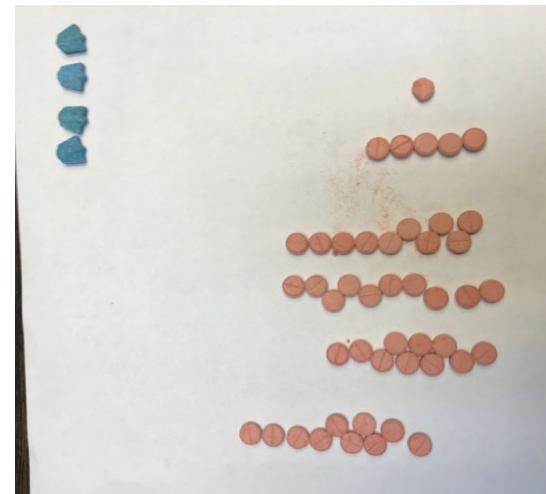
Banks during his recorded post-*Miranda* interview

iii. *Giles in Possession of Marijuana and Methamphetamine with Intent to Distribute on August 16, 2019*

On August 16, 2019, Defendant Giles was driving on 23rd Avenue Northeast in Minneapolis when he was pulled over in a traffic stop for failing to stop at a stop sign and making a lane change without signaling. When officers approached the vehicle, they could smell marijuana. They asked Giles when he last smoked marijuana, and Giles replied earlier that day. They removed Giles from the vehicle but could still smell marijuana on Giles's person. At that point, an officer searched Giles's person and located a lighter, some cash, and a digital scale from his pockets. Upon feeling a non-anatomical

bulge in Giles's crotch, officers located two large baggies containing a total of 58 grams of marijuana.

Officers then searched Giles's vehicle and noticed that the trim of the faceplate near the radio was loose. They removed the faceplate and found two baggies containing a total of fifty blue pills and red pills, comprising a combined drug weight of 0.6 grams of methamphetamine.



Left: Giles during the traffic stop
Right: Methamphetamine pills seized during the search of Giles's vehicle

iv. Banks in Possession of Marijuana with Intent to Distribute at Merwin Liquors on August 27, 2019

On August 27, 2019, MPD officers recognized Defendant Banks sitting in the driver's seat of a Chevrolet Tahoe parked in a parking lot at the intersection of Lyndale Avenue North and West Broadway Avenue. Knowing that Banks had a revoked driver's license, officers approached Banks in the vehicle. While speaking with him, they observed an electronic scale in the center console and could smell marijuana coming from the vehicle. After a

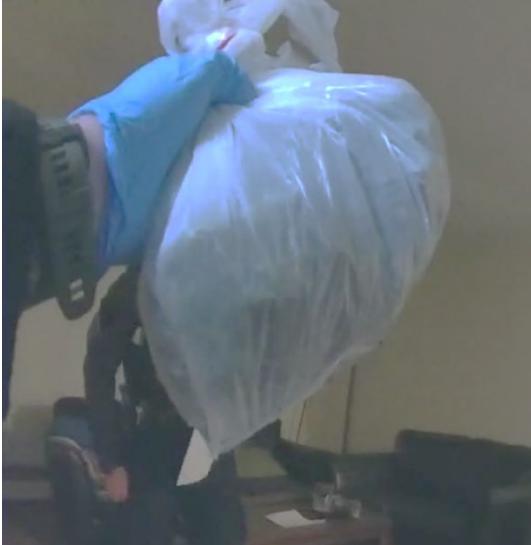
search of Banks's person, officers recovered a plastic bag which contained 55 grams of marijuana.

v. *Banks in Possession of Marijuana with Intent to Distribute and Possession of a Firearm Magazine on February 28, 2020*

On February 28, 2020, officers searched Banks's apartment pursuant to a warrant. Banks was present in the apartment, along with his girlfriend. Officers searched Banks's bedroom and found a digital scale with residue on it on top of the bed. Next to the scale was a wallet with Banks's identification inside of it and approximately \$1,500 in cash. Officers also located a silver handgun magazine in Banks's closet underneath a pile of clothing. The magazine had one live round of ammunition inside of it. Finally, on the floor of the closet, officers located a white plastic bag that contained about 111 grams of marijuana.

In a post-*Miranda* recorded interview, Banks admitted that the marijuana was his and that he had found the firearm magazine inside of a Dodge Charger when he purchased it. He further stated that he uses the scale to weigh marijuana and that he both smokes it and sells it.

Afterwards, officers executed a search warrant for Banks's vehicle. They recovered a baggie of approximately 28 grams of marijuana in the center console.



Left: Marijuana found during the search of Banks' residence
Right: Magazine found during search of Banks' residence

vi. *Defendant Gregory Brown Arrested with 29 Fentanyl Pills on January 22, 2021*

On January 22, 2021, MPD officers conducted a traffic stop of a Jeep Compass with no license plates driven by Defendant Gregory Brown near Columbus Avenue South and Lake Street East in Minneapolis. While searching the vehicle incident to arrest, an officer located 29 blue fentanyl pills in a plastic baggie in a pocket behind the passenger seat.

vii. *Rhodes Arrested with Over 1,000 Fentanyl Pills and \$21,000 on September 21, 2021*

On September 21, 2021, MPD officers responded to the parking lot of the McDonalds located at 1100 University Avenue NE for reports of ongoing narcotics transactions. They observed Highs member Damon Rhodes sitting in the driver's seat of a blue Dodge Charger. As the officers approached,

Rhodes opened the driver's door and attempted to throw a plastic baggie of fentanyl pills onto the ground outside the vehicle.

Officers arrested Rhodes and while searching his person, they found \$2,930 in his pocket. They searched his vehicle and recovered two plastic bags of blue fentanyl pills from the passenger floorboard, \$997 in the cupholder, \$21,000 in the front center console, two more bags containing a total of 183 pills of blue fentanyl pills on the rear seat, and smaller plastic bags containing 897 fentanyl pills inside a backpack.

In a post-*Miranda* interview, Rhodes admitted the pills were his and that he threw them in the backseat of the car when the police came. He claimed ownership over some of the cash and said the rest belonged to an unidentified male that left the scene when the police arrived. Rhodes admitted to selling the fentanyl pills, explaining that they were fronted to him to sell and that he sold them for \$10 a pill. In total, officers recovered approximately 139 grams of fentanyl from Rhodes' vehicle.

viii. *April 26, 2022 Intercepted Parcel of Fentanyl for Calvin Wright*

On April 25, 2022, Defendant Walker had numerous FaceTime calls with co-Defendant Calvin Wright. The following day, April 26, 2022, law enforcement officers traced the delivery of a package of suspected narcotics to Calvin Wright's residence. They conducted physical surveillance of his home,

and observed a U.S. Postal Service employee walk towards Calvin Wright's townhome and confirm that the delivery was made. Approximately one hour later, law enforcement observed a vehicle leaving Calvin Wright's garage.

Law enforcement officers conducted a traffic stop of the vehicle and identified Calvin Wright was the driver. They searched the vehicle and located 2.1 kilograms of fentanyl pills in several heat-sealed bags in the trunk. Thereafter, they obtained and executed a search warrant for Calvin Wright's residence and recovered a total of approximately \$25,000 in U.S. currency from Calvin Wright's master bedroom and bathroom. They also found approximately \$1,100 on Calvin Wright's person and another \$1,500 from the driver's side door of his vehicle. Defendant Giles was present at Wright's residence during the execution of the search warrant and possessed approximately \$6,000.

ix. *Jadarius Wright Arrested at MSP with \$27,000 on May 12, 2022*

On May 12, 2022, Jadarius Wright, a fentanyl pill supplier for the Highs, was stopped by officers with the Airport Police Department at the Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport ("MSP"). Jadarius Wright was scheduled to fly that day from Minneapolis to Arizona, where Wright would obtain his fentanyl pills. A narcotic detection canine had positively indicated for the odor of narcotics for Jadarius Wright's checked luggage and his carryon duffel bag.

Officers seized the bags and obtained and executed a search warrant for them. They recovered a total of \$27,000 in U.S. currency from the luggage and duffel bag, much of which was bound in smaller bundles with rubber bands, which is commonly done for narcotics transactions.

x. Cortez Blakemore Possessed with Intent to Distribute Fentanyl on June 11, 2022

On June 11, 2022, at approximately 9:35 p.m., deputies of the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office ("HCSO") patrolling West Broadway Avenue and Lyndale Avenue North observed a white Charger with an illegally dark tint. They initiated a traffic stop. The driver of the vehicle—later identified as Higs member Cortez Blakemore—continued to roll forward for a few moments, causing investigators to be concerned that he was trying to hide a firearm or contraband before officers approached.

Blakemore eventually stopped the vehicle and rolled down the window as an HCSO deputy approached. The deputy could smell marijuana and saw Blakemore's hand near his waist in the vehicle. The deputies removed Blakemore from the vehicle and recovered 908.5 blue fentanyl pills in a plastic

bag in Blakemore's pants. When asked about them, Blakemore stated "they're just pills" and "I got caught."

xi. *Defendant Banks with Fentanyl and Cash on January 17, 2023*

On January 17, 2023, HCSO deputies were conducting surveillance around West Broadway Avenue and Lyndale Avenue North. They were investigating a number of individuals associated with the Highs who had been seen conducting hand-to-hand narcotics transactions in that area when they spotted Defendant Banks driving a GMC Acadia into the Walgreens parking lot with a passenger.

Deputies observed the Acadia for about two hours, during which at least nine individuals walked up to the vehicle and appeared to exchange cash for blue fentanyl pills or other narcotics.



Surveillance captured individuals exchanging cash for pills outside the Acadia

HCSO deputies stopped the Acadia. They recovered 160 fentanyl pills from a bag in the center console, which was right next to a wallet containing Banks' identification. They also recovered a small amount of marijuana and a digital scale from the vehicle and \$3,600 from Banks' person. When Banks was later processed at the jail, staff found an additional 97 fentanyl pills on his person.

xii. *Montez Brown's Possession of Firearms, U.S. Currency, and Fentanyl Pills for Distribution on April 4, 2023*

On April 4, 2023, MPD's gun unit conducted surveillance on Montez Brown's residence to locate and arrest him pursuant to a warrant. They observed Montez Brown leave his residence and get into a tan Tahoe and drive

away. They also observed a black Mercedes parked directly in front of Montez Brown's residence.

MPD officers conducted a traffic stop of the Tahoe at a nearby Holiday Gas station and attempted to initiate contact with Montez Brown, who initially refused to get out of his vehicle. Brown eventually exited the vehicle, and officers recovered a large quantity of fentanyl pills hidden under the cupholder in the center console. The pills were packaged in ten baggies, each of which contained 100 pills. Officers also recovered \$2,738 in cash and three cell phones from Brown's person.

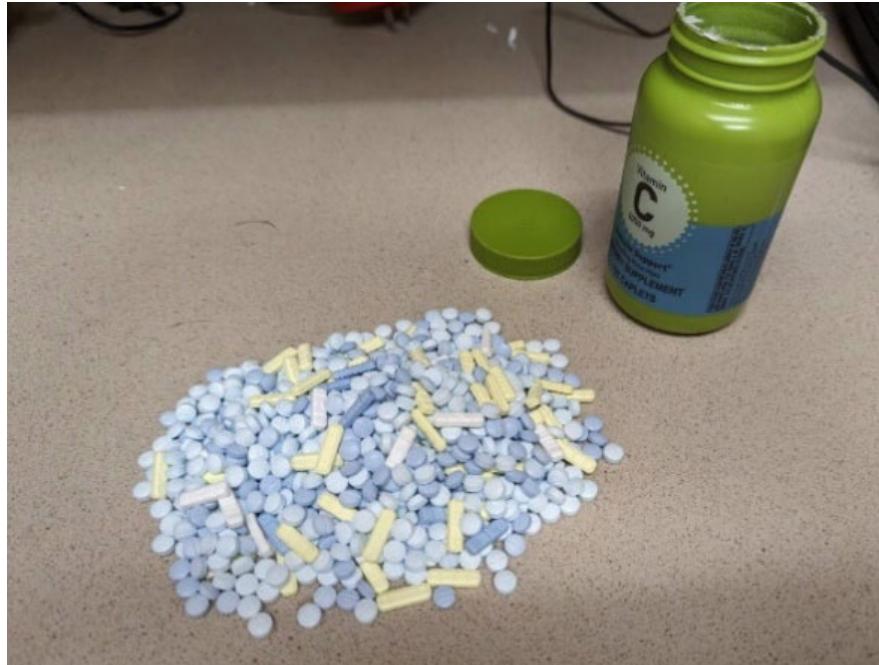
Officers also obtained a search warrant for Montez Brown's residence and searched the Mercedes. Inside the living room, MPD found a small duffel bag that contained Brown's identification cards and nearly \$6,000 in U.S. currency. In the Mercedes, officers recovered a Glock 17 9mm semi-automatic handgun that had an attached machinegun conversion device (or "switch") and an extended magazine; a paper grocery bag containing thousands of fentanyl pills, packaged in the same way as the ones found in the Tahoe; a Glock .380 caliber semi-automatic handgun; and documents containing Montez Brown's information, including his mail and an old search warrant.

xiii. *Defendant Taylor Arrested with Oxycodone at MSP on April 14, 2023*

On April 14, 2023, detectives of the MSP Airport Narcotics Interdiction Unit were working with narcotic-detecting canines who were sniffing luggage from a flight arriving from Las Vegas. A canine positively alerted to the odor of narcotics from a small, hard sided roller bag. Detectives removed the bag and noticed that it was labeled for “Josiah Taylor,” before putting it back on the luggage carousel.

The detectives watched as Taylor picked the bag off of the carousel and began to walk away. They seized the bag and asked Taylor if the bag was his, and he said it was. When asked if the contents inside also belonged to him, Taylor stated “no,” and explained that his cousin who lived in Las Vegas had asked him to bring back his clothing for him, which was inside the bag.

Detectives obtained a search warrant and found a pill bottle inside the roller bag labeled “Vitamin C” that contained 56 grams of Oxycodone pills and 55 grams of assorted Alprazolam pills.



xiv. Poe Arrested with Fentanyl and \$23,000 on April 27, 2023

On April 27, 2023, HCSO deputies searched Poe's residence and his suspected narcotics stash house pursuant to a warrant. A deputy detained Poe and searched his person, and found 28 fentanyl pills, a small amount of fentanyl powder, and \$228 in cash. A safe in Poe's bedroom contained \$23,560 in cash, and deputies recovered another \$1,000 from the pocket of a jacket found in Poe's vehicle. During the search of the stash house, deputies recovered a total of 109 grams of fentanyl powder from the trunk of a broken-down vehicle, including brown fentanyl powder packaged in 70 smaller bindles.

xv. Digital Evidence

Through this investigation, law enforcement has recovered a number of digital communications between Highs members discussing travel and other

logistics to conduct their narcotics trafficking for the enterprise. For example, on September 13, 2022, Nix and Defendant Gregory Brown discussed Nix traveling to Arizona to make a supply run.

Nix texted Defendant Brown that he booked a trip from Minneapolis to Houston, where Brown was living at the time. Then, the same day, Nix flew from Minneapolis to Atlanta to Phoenix and returned to Minneapolis on September 15, 2022. Nix texted Brown, “I tweaked did one with a stop before AZ,” referring to his stop in Atlanta. Brown replied, “try to reschedule a nonstop.”

A cooperating defendant will testify that Defendant Brown is an EMB member of the Highs who is one of the largest narcotics distributors for the Highs. He will explain that Brown sells fentanyl pills to other Highs members and distributes pills in the quantities of thousands.

Similarly, after Calvin Wright was stopped with over two kilograms of fentanyl pills on April 26, 2022, he texted Highs member Jadarius Wright “they got me f**k” and “obd call q.” “Q” is an alias and street name for Defendant Walker. After receiving that text message, Jadarius Wright called Walker. Walker and Jadarius Wright called each other multiple times that day.

On May 10, 2022, Jadarius Wright contacted Defendant Walker about fentanyl transactions and shipments. Wright stated, “I aint booked ticket yet

even if I gotta stay one more day I will, I just need to get as much as I can. I got to much in streets rn. Plus I'm waiting on word to see if Los coming this way as well before I take off." "Los" is an alias and street name for co-Defendant Carlos Serrano. Jadarius Wright also texted Walker, "hit up squizzy see if he got a dime or dub ready." "Squizzy" is an alias and street name for Deandre Poe. A cooperating defendant will testify that Walker is an associate of the Highs who supplies and distributes large amounts of fentanyl pills to Highs members.

Finally, law enforcement officers recovered photographs of narcotics taken by Highs members on their cell phones. For example, on February 8, 2023, Nix took the photograph below of thousands of fentanyl pills:



IV. EVIDENTIARY ISSUES

The United States has separately filed 12 motions in limine regarding evidentiary issues. The 12 motions are:

- (1) Motion to admit self-authenticating records;
- (2) Motion to admit crime scene and autopsy photographs;
- (3) Motion to admit co-conspirator statements;
- (4) Motion to impeach defendants with prior convictions;
- (5) Motion to preclude references to potential punishments and state punishments;
- (6) Motion to preclude evidence related to discovery issues;
- (7) Motion to admit summary charts;
- (8) Motion to preclude defendants' hearsay statements;
- (9) Motion to admit witness plea agreements and cooperation agreements;
- (10) Motion to preclude references to national or local police controversy;
- (11) Motion to exclude testimony of Odell Wilson; and
- (12) Motion to exclude certain juvenile and pending convictions.

/s/ Brian W. Lynch
BRIAN W. LYNCH
Trial Attorney
Ohio Bar No. 86245
Violent Crime and Racketeering Section
U.S. Department of Justice
Washington, DC 20530

/s/ Alyssa Levey-Weinstein
ALYSSA LEVEY-WEINSTEIN
Trial Attorney
NJ Bar No. 338742021
Violent Crime and Racketeering Section
U.S. Department of Justice
Washington, DC 20530

/s/ Thomas Calhoun-Lopez
THOMAS CALHOUN-LOPEZ
Assistant United States Attorney
DC Bar No. 480908DC
United States Attorneys' Office
District of Minnesota
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55415

/s/ Carla J. Baumel
CARLA J. BAUMEL
Assistant United States Attorney
Minnesota Bar No. 0504848
United States Attorneys' Office
District of Minnesota
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55415